

Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Committee Meeting
December 3, 2021

Attendees: (*in-person*) Edie Dondero (Chair), Dennis Roberts, Kathy Wood, Andrea Sokoloff; (*on phone*) Beth Rosso, Glenn Tom, Bob Shields, Rob Herb, Bill Tinklepaugh

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 AM. The minutes of the September and October meetings were unanimously approved.

The discussion started at the October meeting about speed limits on Town roads continued. Dennis Roberts stated his opinion that the speed limit should be reduced to 15mph on all Town roads, as opposed to select streets only, for consistency and because public safety is equally important on all roads. Andi Sokoloff agreed that 15mph is appropriate and relayed her observation that vehicles on Black Gum Drive frequently exceed the posted speed limit of 20mph. Kathy Wood felt that 15mph is unrealistic and that lowering the limit will not discourage people from speeding. She felt that more enforcement is needed to slow vehicles and to better quantify the problem. She also questioned whether the Council has the authority under the Delaware Code to reduce speed limits. Bob Shields agreed that better enforcement on roads other than Coastal Highway is needed. Dennis Roberts pointed out that the objective is to get people to slow down. If 15mph is the limit, many vehicles will actually travel 20-25mph and that it is much safer if one gets hit at 20mph than at 30mph, which seems to be the current rate of speed for most vehicles. Several other members indicated their support if the limit was consistent throughout Town. The Committee voted 8-1 to recommend that the Council reduce the speed limit on Town roads to 15mph.

Committee Chair Dondero asked if any members of the Committee would be willing to volunteer to work on drafting educational materials conveying bike and pedestrian safety tips. Glenn Tom, Bob Shields and Kathy Woods volunteered. It was suggested that they recommend a format for the information (flyers, website, fridge magnets) and draft appropriate text.

Dennis Roberts asked if the Committee should make any recommendations to the Council about speed limits on Coastal Highway. Chair Dondero explained that the Council is scheduled to vote on whether or not to support the petition to DelDOT from Bethany Beach, Middlesex and Sea Colony proposing a reduction, so no formal recommendation from the Committee was needed.

Andi Sokoloff pointed out that while the Committee previously voted to recommend to Council that signage be installed addressing road safety, that it is important to be mindful of the beauty of our town and to be wary of "sign pollution."

Prompted by Chief Lovins' presentation at the October meeting and his explanation of traffic laws related to the flashing beacons at the crosswalks, Bob Shields asked for clarification on

where the crosswalk actually begins (in the travel lane or on the shoulder). Chair Dondero will seek an answer to the question, as Chief Lovins was not in attendance.

Kathy Wood inquired whether the sign on Kent Avenue detailing the seasonal turning restrictions onto Black Gum could be replaced with a new sign that had less text and was easier to read from a distance. Chair Dondero commented that because Kent Avenue is a roadway under the jurisdiction of DeIDOT, the Town may not be able to replace the sign without their approval. She will seek an answer to the question. Beth Rosso mentioned that she had encountered cyclists who were unsure whether or not they were permitted to turn onto Black Gum when the barricade was in place.

Glenn Tom suggested that a future topic for discussion and action by the Committee should be pedestrian and cyclists on Town roads after dark and, in particular, the need for the use of flashlights or headlamps.

Chair Dondero would like the Committee to work with the South Bethany Police Department and/or the Bethany Beach VFC on a bike safety event in the summer of 2022. If grant funds can be secured, the event could include giveaways of bike helmets for children and/or headlights for any cyclists.

It was also mentioned that there may be more roads in Town that could benefit from speed bumps, including Canal and South Anchorage.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00am.